

Do not hesitate to contact your Physician or Public Health Department Nurse if you are concerned or have questions.

*Panhandle Health District offices
are ready to serve you in each
of the five northern counties
of Idaho*

Kootenai County
8500 N. Atlas Road
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208 415-5100

Bonner County
1020 Michigan
Sandpoint ID 83864
208 263-5159

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7402 Caribou
Bonners Ferry ID 83805
208 267-5558

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711 Jefferson
St. Maries ID 83861
208 245-4556

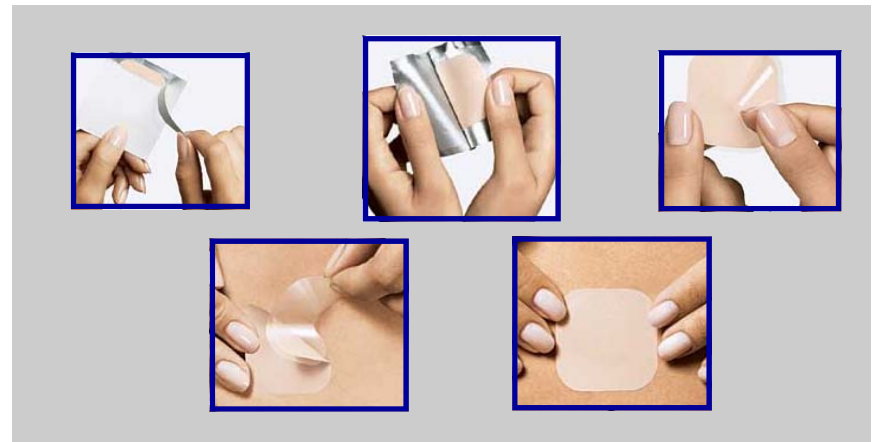
Shoshone County
114 W Riverside
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Idaho Reproductive Health Program

The Patch- Transdermal Contraception



**Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Bureau of Clinical and Preventive Services**

General reference: Contraceptive Technology: 17th Rev. Ed., 1998 and Contraceptive Updates 2000-2003

How the patch works

The birth control patch is a thin, stick-on, square, 1-3/4 inch patch that allows hormones to enter the bloodstream through the skin. Like birth control pills, a combination of hormones in the patch stops your body from releasing an egg, so no egg can be fertilized. The hormones also cause the liquid at the opening of the uterus to thicken, which can stop sperm from getting into the uterus.

How to use the patch

The patch is a once-a-week method of birth control on a four-week cycle. A new patch must be used each week for three weeks. Bleeding is expected during the fourth week when no patch is used. The patch is placed on healthy skin on the abdomen, buttock, lower back, upper outer arm or upper torso where it will not be rubbed by tight clothing. It is replaced on the same day of the week for three weeks. The fourth week is patch-free. There should never be more than a seven-day patch-free time between patches. Follow the written instructions that come with the patch.

Effectiveness

Because this method of birth control is relatively new, the research for effectiveness rates is not as extensive as for other hormonal methods. Currently, the perfect use effectiveness rate is 99%; fewer than 1 woman out of 100 will get pregnant when using the patch the correct way. There may be an increased risk of pregnancy for women who weight over 200 pounds.



Benefits of the patch

The patch is small, thin and smooth and can be worn under your clothes. You only have to change it once a week and you can wear it in a different place each week. It stays on while you shower, bathe, swim or exercise. Warm, humid conditions do not decrease its sticking power.

Potential side effects and disadvantages

The side effects may include breast tenderness, nausea, headache, menstrual cramps and abdominal pain. They can also include skin reactions where the patch is placed. Using the patch **will not** give you protection against HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and syphilis.

Where can you get the patch?

The birth control patch requires a prescription from a qualified health provider. Call your local health department, family planning agency or Planned Parenthood for information.

Potential Risks

Some women should not use the patch because of specific health conditions. If a woman has a history of cardiovascular disease, it is recommended that she not use the patch. Ask your health provider. Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular (blood clot, heart attack, stroke) side effects, especially for women over 35. Women who use combination hormonal contraceptives are strongly advised not to smoke.